All the next day we followed their trail until we came upon them at dusk. It was the main Comanche camp that my captor had been seeking; his wife's parents were there. I noticed that their hair, and that of his sister, was already long. He must have been gone on this raid for several years. 727

He led me into their tipi—all fixed up with blankets—and he bade me sit down at the west side (my regular place was next to the door). The women of the family struck me with whips, as was the custom on the arrival of a new captive in camp.

My job was to care for his children. The little crippled one I had to carry on my back; the other one I led about. Wherever they went to play, I had to go with them. [732]

Waha·mɔ slept regularly with his former wife's younger sister, *Puki*.

That winter a party left on a hunting trip to get some more meat. In their absence we had trouble keeping the horses. A big snow storm came up and completely buried some horses. In the main camp we were short of wood and food. The captive boys had to dig paths in the snow and dig for frozen horses for us to eat. They fed the living horses cottonwood shoots; the bark is good food, but it was frozen and cut the horses' mouths. After the horses had eaten the bark, the captive boys brought in the twigs for fuel.

The hunting party was out for nearly a month on account of the storm. They lost many horses, and they nearly starved to death. Still, they brought back a little meat. The people out on the party invented snowshoes made of woven sinews. One man on snowshoes shot an animal with an arrow, and when he ran up to it, he slid right past it. Others borrowed his snowshoes, because they didn't have enough sinew to make shoes for all the hunters. [481]

That was a hard winter.

Waha·mɔ taught me to hunt during the next spring. He had not yet married me. He was just kind to me. His wife would take a stick out of the fire and poke it at me out of jealousy to scare me and make me cry, but her step-children would help me against her.

By the fall of the second year I knew the language and was familiar with the customs. » » »

7: Richardson D-4 (no date) 1929
NO6 Comanche NO6
Wichita NO10

looking somewhat like a giant bee hive of the old fashion. They raised crops of corn, pumpkins and possibly tobacco. On the other hand the Apaches practiced agriculture only to a limited extent and commonly lived in crude brush lodges. Although they had but few arts their women were skilled basket makers.[6] In contradistinction to these other tribes, the Comanches, like their allies the Kiowas, never planted seed of any kind. Thus the Caddoan, Shoshonean, and Athapascan families have all been represented in the Abilene country at one time or another. It seems that the Wichitas and Apaches were here from time immemorial, but the Comanches were late comers. The stone artifacts we find in this country may have belonged to the Wichitas or Lipans; but it is not likely that any stone implement found here, excepting perhaps stone hammers and clubs, were ever used by the Comanches. Long before the latter tribe had reached this country, iron, steel, tin and copper had pretty well supplanted the stone and bone implements used by their forbears. Naturally this improvement in implements, together with the introduction of the horse worked some transformation among them; but we cannot follow this out because we know practically nothing of their culture before they came in touch with a higher civilization.

In physical appearance there was little to distinguish the Comanche from his fellow plains savages of other tribes. The artist Catlin described the race as "in statue rather low, and in person, often approaching to corpulency"; and stated that they were not as large and handsome as the Kiowas. He added that, "In their movements they were heavy and ungraceful; and on their feet one of the most unattractive and slovenly-looking races of Indians that I have ever seen." But the mounted Comanche presented an entirely different appearance. Once on his horse, he continued, "He gracefully flies away like a different being."[7] Some twenty years later, about 1854, Captain R. B. Marcy, of the United States Army, described the men as of "About the medium statue, with bright copper-colored complexions and intelligent countenances, in many instances with aquiline noses, thin lips, black eyes and hair, with but

6. For the picture of a Wichita village see George Catlin, North American Indians, Being Letters and Notes on their Manners, Customs, and Conditions, written during eight years' travel amongst the wildest tribes of Indians in North America, 1832-1839 (Edinburg, 1926), II, plate 178. On the Apaches see Hodge, Handbook, I, 65-66.

7. North American Indians, II, 74 and 84.

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

These young Indians had
spent less time on horseback and more time inside, out of the weather; nor had they ever ridden the war trails. The women of this group took better care of their hair. The older women's hair generally had an untidy look.

This sullen aloofness and aimless drifting didn't affect the younger children—it seemed to set in when a boy got to be fifteen or sixteen years old. The younger children, when they arrived home on vacation, were bursting with energy. They rode their ponies helter-skelter over the prairies and rivaled the channel cat in Cache Creek with their cavorting, swimming, and diving.

They came to town with their parents—the girls riding in a hack or the little lumber wagon with the women. If it was the wagon, the bows and canvas cover converted it into a little prairie schooner. On a nice day the canvas would be rolled up a ways on either side, to let the air through.

Comanche men and boys never rode in the wagon or hack with the women. The boys would be riding along with their father, horseback. If there were not enough stock saddles to go around, the younger boys would be riding ancient Mexican-type saddles. These Mexican saddles had a flat look, compared to the up-to-date stock saddle. Neither the fork nor the cantle was as high, while the seat was broader. Its most distinguishing feature was the top of the fork. Thin, broad, and round, it made one think of a pancake. I am sure the tops of some of the horns were as much as four inches across.

Somehow, the youngsters always had a few nickels to spend for candy, cakes, and wax—their name for all kinds of chewing gum. The happy parents stood around and glowed in their pride. Sometimes the parents had one of the youngsters show off—they would have one of the boys interpret as they bought their groceries or other store items. They wanted everyone in the store to see how much their children had learned.

But all this youthful, happy exuberance suddenly vanished in the late teens. Few of the girls stayed in school as long as the boys, and the girls never got the good from their Carlisle clothes. About the second or third time they came to the store after their last year in school, they would buy some gay-colored, patterned calico along with matching cotton braid. The next time you saw them, they would be wearing a *pit-si-qui-na.*

The young men did wear out their white man's clothes, but seem-

32: Gilles O,X-3 (1902-c.1910) 1974
NO6 Comanche NO6
Oklahoma

until years later, after I had gone away to college myself, that I tried to analyze the reasons for the old fellows' interest in me.

One conclusion I reached was that because of my size and what they saw me doing, they had thought of me as being older than I actually was. I was as tall as I am now and weighed a muscular 180 pounds. My parents were expecting a man's work from me, and they saw to it that I kept busy. In my skills, I could do a man's work and was doing it, though I was carrying around on my large body only a fourteen-year-old head and, of course, a like amount of experience.

While we were getting the store into operation, Dad hired the team and me out several days to haul rock for the new school's foundation. Then, to have some spending money, I hired myself out to a farmer to break prairie sod—driving one of his teams. I hauled freight for the store, waited on the trade, and, after Dad bought a relinquishment, did the necessary farm work on the claim. When I had leisure I fished and hunted. These old fellows often saw me five or more miles from town, and to the horse-minded Comanches that was an unheard-of distance for anyone to walk.

This continuous activity of mine must have contrasted bitterly with the inertness of their own offspring. And one other possibility occurred to me. Almost all the older Comanches drank hard liquor, when the opportunity was present, but they had great respect for any white man who abstained.

Here was a man who could obtain whiskey at any time and yet didn't drink. It meant something special to them. In their book I was a Jesus Man. Apparently they could conceive of no other reason for abstention. This thinking possibly related to the missionaries, sent out by churches in the East, who were the only white men they had come in contact with who didn't drink.

One Carlisle man who found a beneficial and happy use for his education was Charley Ross. He must have been one of the very first Comanches sent to Carlisle after the surrender in 1876. A happy, outgoing chap, he made a life's work of smoothing the way between the white man and the older Indians. I saw him often and knew him quite well while Dad had his trading store. Once I saw him interpreting a sermon at an Indian camp meeting. After I started to practice law in Oklahoma City, I saw him acting as an interpreter in court trials, and once in a legislative committee hearing. He was always available when his people needed him.